Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 109390
ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

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R 132224Z MAY 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO CINCPAC POLAD

S E C R E T STATE 109390

EXDIS - MILITARY ADDRESSEE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO LONDON FROM MUSCAT
MAY 08:

QUOTE S E C R E T MUSCAT 0735

EXDIS

LONDON ALSO FOR ASST. SECRETARY ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR MU US
SUBJECT: MASIRAH ISLAND

REF: (A) MUSCAT 0723, (B) STATE 100463, (C) MUSCAT 0644,
(D) STATE 062009

1. FOREIGN MINISTER ZAWAWI ASKED TO SEE ME ON HOUR'S NOTICE
MAY 7. HE TOLD ME HIS RETURN FROM LONDON WAS ADVANCED SEVERAL
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DAYS BECAUSE OF URGENT BUSINESS RELATED TO SULTAN'S UPCOMING
OFFICIAL VISITS TO RIYADH, CAIRO AND AMMAN (REPORTED SEPTEL).

2. ZAWAWI SAID UNDERSECRETARY AL-ALAWI HAD TOLD HIM OF OUR
MAY 4 DISCUSSION. ZAWAWI CONFIRMED HIS INTENTION TO PRESENT
EMBASSY OFFICIAL NOTE OR AIDE MEMOIRE SHORTLY REGARDING MASIRAH.
HE SAID IT WILL CONTAIN FOLLOWING POINTS:

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A. SOAF WISHES OCCASIONAL USN VISITS TO MASIRAH BE HELD AT MAXIMUM OF SIX QUARTERLY AT LEAST FOR FIRST TWO OR THREE MONTHS. THIS IS BECAUSE OF HEAVY WORKLOAD GETTING MASIRAH AIRFIELD PROPERLY ACTIVATED AS A SOAF FACILITY.

B. REGARDING OUR LIST OF DESIRABLE, AS AGAINST ESSENTIAL, P-3 SUPPORT FACILITIES, SOAF LACKS ELECTRICAL GROUND POWER UNIT AND/OR GROUND ENGINE AIRSTART UNIT AT MASIRAH. IT MAY SOON ACQUIRE IT, OR THEM. MEANWHILE SUCH UNIT OR UNITS ARE AVAILABLE AT SEEB AIRPORT NEAR MUSCAT AND COULD BE FLOWN TO MASIRAH IF AND WHEN NEEDED.

C. THERE WILL BE NO PROBLEM WITH OUR OTHER LOGISTIC REQUIREMENTS (REFUELING, OVERNIGHT BILLETING, AIRCRAFT SECURITY, FILING AND WEATHER BRIEFING FACILITIES, AND MESSING FACILITIES).

3. AFTER THEN BRIEFLY SHUFFLING THROUGH A DOCUMENT ON HIS DESK, ZAWAWI ADDED THAT, IN ADDITION, SOAF AND DEFENSE MINISTRY ASK FOR A US GRANT-IN-AID OF R.O. 2 MILLION (DOLS 5.8 MILLION) ANNUALLY TOWARD THEIR ADMINISTRATION OF PILOT TRAINING SCHOOL AND REGULAR AIRFIELD OPERATIONS ON MASIRAH.

4. I SAID I WOULD REPORT ALL THIS TO WASHINGTON. IN MEANTIME, DCM SIZER, WHO WOULD BE IN CHARGE OF EMBASSY IN MY ABSENCE AND IS ENTIRELY FAMILIAR WITH MASIRAH SUBJECT, WOULD AWAIT OMANGOV NOTE OR AIDE MEMOIRE. NOTING THAT OUR RESPONSE TO PARA 3 ABOVE MIGHT TAKE SOME TIME, I ASKED HOW OMANGOV MIGHT VIEW POSSIBILITY OF RENEWAL OF OUR P-3 VISITS IN THE INTERIM. ZAWAWI

SAID THIS WOULD BE WELCOMED.

5. BY WAY OF APOLOGY, ZAWAWI SAID HE INTENDED CONVEY OMANGOV RESPONSE TO ME FORTNIGHT AGO (REF C) BUT INTENTION MISFIRED BECAUSE HIS GOUT SUDDENLY AND PAINFULLY ACTED UP APRIL 21 THUS DELAYING AN IN-HOUSE DISCUSSION WITH BENNETT, LANDON AND BROWNING. THAT SESSION, A NECESSARY PRELIMINARY TO SEEING ME, WAS PERFORCE DELAYED UNTIL THEIR RECENT AIR DEFENSE MEETINGS TOGETHER IN UK.

6. COMMENT: I THINK WE SHOULD NOT REACT PREMATURELY TO THIS ZAWAWI PRESENTATION BUT AWAIT THE PAPER HE PROMISED TO SEE EXACTLY HOW OMANIS ARE CASTING THEIR RESPONSE. ALSO RECOMMEND HOLDING UP, AT LEAST UNTIL MY HOPED-FOR DISCUSSION WITH ASST. SECRETARY ATHERTON MAY 10, OUR PROPOSED REQUEST TO OMANGOV FOR SECOND QUARTER VISITS (REF B PARA 4). END COMMENT. WOLLE
UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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